

Seattle Public Schools



Drinking Water Quality Improvement Program

Presentation to Washington
State Board of Health

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Purpose

- **Seattle Schools Drinking Water Improvement Program**
- **Testing and Reporting by Other Districts**
- **Comprehensive Guidelines for Lead Testing and Remediation in Schools**

Seattle Public Schools

Goals/Philosophy

- **“Provide access to ample quantities of clean, safe, aesthetically pleasing water”**
- **Establish and maintain public confidence:** utilize an open program of full disclosure of test results; retain experts to provide the best advice; create a public oversight committee; hold community meetings and public school board briefing sessions
- **Be proactive:** Identify and address public concerns; e.g., prepare and publish health information; test for additional contaminants not required by law

Approach

- **Provide bottled water** until testing determines water is safe
- **Consult with and follow advice of recognized authorities and experts**
 - State and County Health Departments
 - Seattle Public Utilities
 - Toxicologists
 - Drinking Water Consultants
 - NW Pediatric Environmental Health Special Unit Report

Go Beyond Regulatory Requirements

- **To provide increased confidence in the safety and quality of drinking water, test for more than the minimum:**
 - Lead at 10 ppb (EPA standard is 20 ppb)
 - Cadmium at 5 ppb (not required)
 - Copper 1.3 ppm (not required)
 - Coliform Bacteria (not required)
 - Iron at 0.3 ppm (not required)
- **See Key Elements Document**

Reporting of Results

- **Seattle Schools results posted on web site**
 - www.seattleschools.org/area/facilities/WaterQuality/water_quality_update_nov5.htm
 - Complete testing results for every location in every school, from 1990 to present; updated regularly
 - Remediation Plans for each school and location
 - Background materials and Health Info
- **School staff, students and parents notified directly in writing of results**

Lead Test Results

- 2400 Locations tested
- 25% of locations fail 20 ppb standard
- 10% more fail 10 ppb standard
- Only 3% fail for flushed water
- Toxicologist's analysis shows only 4 sources had high enough levels to raise predicted blood lead levels above 5 mcg/dL

Other Test Results

- **Cadmium:** 3% fail
- **Coliform:** 6 schools with detected coliform
- **Copper:** 2% fail
- **Iron:** 50 schools have some iron; 11 require complete pipe replacement

Draft Policy

- Testing for Lead, Cadmium, Copper, Iron and Bacteria
- Criteria based on EPA standards for public water systems
- Specify Locations tested
- Minimum Access Criteria: Fix those needed, disable locations not needed
- Periodic Retesting
- Oversight Committee

Other School Districts

- Most do not regularly test
- Lead only or other characteristics?
- Some locations or all?
- Turn sources off until proven safe or assume everything is OK?
- 20 ppb or 10 or 50?
- EPA protocol or relaxed standards?
- Fix or retest?
- Test results are similar to SPS
- Reporting of results: Actual levels or pass/fail?
- Report by location or just school-wide results?

What can the Board of Health do?

- **Publish Comprehensive Voluntary Guidelines** – Districts need information. Those that follow guidelines can publicize their compliance, to improve public confidence
- **Recommend Testing for Lead** – EPA standard of 20 ppb
- **Recommend** which locations and how often
- **Provide a Testing Protocol** - per EPA
- **Reporting Guidelines** - actual results for each location, with specific remediation plans
- **Provide Basic Health Information** – e.g., Seattle Schools website, NW PEHSU materials ¹¹

DISCUSSION

Additional Slides

- **Handouts**
- **Locations Tested**
- **Access Requirements**
- **Periodic Testing**
- **Oversight Committee and Public Involvement**
- **Remediation Options**

Handouts

- Draft Policy and Procedure
- Draft Board Motion
- Summary of Key Elements of Seattle Draft Policy
- Website Materials
- Sample School Report and Remediation Plan
- Other school district materials
- Newspaper Articles on Seattle Policy (10/27, 11/3)
- NW PEHSU Analysis

Locations Tested

- **Drinking Fountains:** Any accessible to students
- **Sinks:** Classrooms; Staff Lounges; Nurse's Offices; Kitchens
- **Locations Not Covered:** Hot water sources; Restrooms; Sinks in other locations, such as custodial offices; Locations not accessible to students

Access Requirements

- **Elementary Schools:** Fountains and sinks in Classrooms
- **Secondary Schools:** Hallway fountains located in each wing and each floor
- **Provide Bottled Water** in locations which do not comply until they can be fixed
- **Disable locations not needed**

Periodic Testing

- Every 3 Years
- More often as appropriate
- If a school is fully compliant for two consecutive rounds; increase test cycle to 5 years

Public Involvement

- Policy and Legislative Committee
- Testimony at Board Meetings
- Oversight Committee
- Meetings with Parents

Remediation Options

- Filter plus fixture replacement
- Connective piping plus fixture replacement
- Major Pipe Replacement
- Epoxy Lining
- Long Term bottled water for individual locations that are too expensive to fix